CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 21 September 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Benjelloun-Touimi (Morocco)

GE.95-63823 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 719th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Conference, I would like to extend a welcome to the new representative of Hungary to the Conference, Ambassador Péter Náray, who will be our first speaker today. I would like to assure him of our full support and total cooperation as he carries out his new tasks.

Apart from the representative of Hungary, I have on the list of speakers for today the representatives of India, Norway, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and the representatives of Sri Lanka, South Africa and Slovakia. However, before I give them the floor I would like to propose that the Conference should adopt the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, published as document CD/1346. May I take it that the Conference adopts this report? There is apparently no objection.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I would like to take this opportunity to express on behalf of all of us our gratitude to Ambassador Dembinski for the efforts he has made to achieve progress in the negotiations.

I would also like to inform you that, as I announced last Thursday, once we have run through the list of speakers I intend to submit to the Conference for a decision the Presidential draft decision contained in document CD/WP.467/Rev.1, concerning the expansion of the membership of the Conference, which I submitted to all delegations following the intensive consultations I conducted both bilaterally and in informal meetings with all delegations.

I invite the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Náray, to take the floor.

Mr. NARAY (Hungary): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am particularly pleased to make my first statement in the period when you are presiding over our proceedings. My delegation commends highly your dynamic efforts allowing us to discuss in depth some of the sensitive outstanding issues on our agenda. May I also thank your predecessor, Ambassador Yumjav of Mongolia, for the way he fulfilled his duties as President?

As the annual session of the CD draws to a close, one can look back at 1995 as a year that has brought the international community closer to the conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear testing in a comprehensive and verifiable manner. In this context I should like to reiterate that Hungary has always been and continues to be a strong supporter of the total prohibition of all nuclear explosions, in all environments, for all time, and advocates the earliest possible implementation of a nuclear test ban. It follows from this that my delegation is ready to lend its support to the draft

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

article on the scope of prohibition submitted by Australia and contained in document WP.222. The chances of the successful completion of the CTBT negotiations in 1996 have been significantly enhanced by the decisions of the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France to seek a ban on any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other explosion, including explosions of low yield, in the ongoing talks on a comprehensive test ban. We strongly hope that these steps will set a pattern of a responsible attitude on behalf of all nuclear-weapons States and others will also contribute to this trend of convergence of positions on this crucial issue of the future treaty.

As far as other yet unresolved issues are concerned our expectation is that if the corresponding political will prevails, a relatively early agreement on many aspects of the future organization is possible. I should like to reiterate our position that the goals and purposes of this legal instrument can best be promoted and implemented by an independent organization which, however, will draw on the expertise and existing infrastructure of a major international organization, namely the International Atomic Energy Agency. Hungary attaches high importance to finding through such an arrangement the most cost-effective ways of operating the verification regime. In this context I should like to reaffirm my Government's strong preference for Vienna as the seat of the CTBT organization.

Next year the Conference will face the challenge of implementing those aspects of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference, which have direct relevance for our work in this room. We add our voice to those who envisage the completion of the CTBT negotiations by the end of the second part of next year's session, allowing the signature before the end of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The resumption of nuclear testing by certain nuclear-weapon States only stresses the importance of meeting this deadline. While expressing our regret over the nuclear explosion tests carried out since last May, we welcome France's strong commitment to sign a CTBT by autumn 1996.

Another important item of the programme of action that the CD cannot neglect is the call for immediate negotiations on a fissile material cut-off. In the view of my delegation the conclusion of such a treaty would mean another breakthrough in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I cannot but urge this body to overcome the present procedural deadlock and to start substantive negotiations on the subject early next year on the basis of the carefully worded mandate contained in the report of Ambassador Shannon.

I would be remiss in my first address to the Conference on Disarmament if I did not mention a special field of arms control to which, in our judgement, not enough attention has been devoted and which has not yet found its appropriate place in our agenda. It is the question of conventional armaments that I am referring to. One should not lose sight of the fact that all major conflicts and wars of the past decades have been fought with this category of weapons. This delegation is firmly convinced of the necessity of including

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

this item in our programme of work for next year and the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments without linking it to any other issue.

In concluding, I express my commitment and that of my delegation to promote the activities of the Conference on Disarmament. I look forward to working closely with all members and observers of the CD in meeting the challenges ahead of us.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Ghose.

Ms. GHOSE (India): Mr. President, may I start with a warm welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassador Mark Moher of Canada, Ambassador Joëlle Bourgois of France and Ambassador Péter Náray of Hungary, and at the same time thank all colleagues who have earlier in the session addressed their words of welcome to me? As this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to formally congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference and assure you of the continued and what should by now be evident to you cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to assure all delegations as well as the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, and the Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Bensmail of the earnest wish of my delegation to work together in the CD to obtain those results towards which our negotiations are aimed.

Mr. President, we have noted with appreciation your continuing efforts to introduce some flexibility and forward movement in the work of the Conference this year and we hope that these efforts will be rewarded with success. One of the issues which you have chosen as a possible area for forward movement is that of expansion of the membership. On the important question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference, India appreciates the concern expressed by several countries who are waiting to become members of the CD. It was this sympathy with their point of view which had governed our decision to support the O'Sullivan package. We continue to believe in the validity of this expansion and trust that it can take place as soon as possible. However, the debate on expansion has also brought to light a fundamental issue about the role and functioning of the CD. We believe and we are sure most delegations agree that the CD is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament issues. The operative word here is, of course, "negotiating" and we must, I feel, keep this characteristic of the CD in mind. Any further expansion should, in our view, therefore only follow a full discussion in the CD of the optimum number of members of the CD which would, on the one hand, balance the legitimate interests and aspirations of applicant countries and, on the other, the need to retain the efficacy and efficiency of the negotiating body.

Besides the issue of expansion, there remains the matter, yet unresolved, of the setting up of ad hoc committees on the other pressing questions on our agenda. As a co-sponsor of United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/75 L, India had welcomed the establishment of an ad hoc

(Ms. Ghose, India)

committee to negotiate the convention to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We trust that these negotiations can begin as soon as possible. We would also like to see an early establishment, now unfortunately only possible in the next session, of the ad hoc committees on negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space and transparency in armaments.

The single major issue that has been the subject of some considerable, albeit informal debate this year was on how and even whether to address the question of nuclear disarmament in the CD. I must say that I am at a loss to understand the attitudes of some of our colleagues on this issue. If they are asked why they are reluctant to discuss the issue, we are told they are not, but they demand to know what we wish to negotiate. If this is indicated, we are accused of insatiable appetites and any multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament are ruled out. Apart from this somewhat cyclical and sometimes even hypnotizing game, we are taken aback by the resistance to discussing and negotiating nuclear disarmament in the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. This is all the more surprising given the priority attached to nuclear disarmament by the international community, since the first special session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly. The CD can hardly ignore the repeated and increasingly persistent desire of the international community to urgently move towards the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

India has long believed and continues to believe that the only answer to the nuclear threat is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We understand that this cannot be done overnight but we are convinced that this can and should be done in a phased and time-bound framework. This demand has been seen as unrealistic and idealistic on the grounds that nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented. This we feel is a disingenuous argument. If the international community can ban and eliminate biological and chemical weapons, then the same international community should also have the courage to negotiate a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons which are far and away the most highly developed and extensively stockpiled of the weapons of mass destruction.

We understand and appreciate that governments work under domestic political, academic and media pressures, constraints and compulsions. This is a fact of life which is true for many, if not all of us. In my country, too, international negotiations on nuclear issues are carefully monitored, and nuclear disarmament is an issue on which Indian opinion is united. The CTBT and the proposed cut-off convention are seen as essential steps towards total nuclear disarmament. They are indeed, in our view, steps towards the eventual goal which will be meaningful only if they are linked firmly to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons within a well-defined time framework. Otherwise they will be seen as narrow and futile exercises aimed only at controlling non-nuclear-weapon States, further strengthening the discrimination inherent in the non-proliferation regimes which exist today. India is committed to the CTBT and has been participating constructively in the negotiations with the aim of an early and successful conclusion of the treaty. But this treaty should be accompanied by a sincere effort towards building a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory disarmament regime.

(Ms. Ghose, India)

At the moment such an effort is conspicuous by its absence. We are not "greedy" but we are dogged and persistent in our belief in the self-evident justness of our cause.

I would also like to take this opportunity of addressing some of the issues currently before the CTBT negotiators. We recognize that the pace of negotiations has been satisfactory over the last month or so and yet disagreements remain in many vital areas. It is imperative that the gaps in different positions be closed through sincere negotiations conducted in good faith and taking into account all genuine concerns. Only on this basis will we eventually have a good treaty which is voluntarily accepted and fully implemented.

First and foremost, we believe for reasons which I have already mentioned, the preamble of the treaty will have to clearly define the linkage of the CTBT to the overall framework of nuclear disarmament. The scope of the treaty should cover complete cessation of nuclear tests by all States in all environments and for all time. We do not believe that there should be any exceptions for carrying out nuclear tests under any circumstances and should thus inhibit, in a non-discriminatory manner, the proliferation of nuclear weapons in both the horizontal as well as the vertical dimensions. We trust that this fundamental article of the treaty can be resolved to meet these concerns.

There has been considerable progress during this session on other legal and institutional issues such as the articles on duration and withdrawal and on amendments. The text on some of the other articles in this group has also been considerably rationalized though crucial issues like the composition of the Executive Council have to be looked into more closely. Responses to the questionnaires issued to IAEA and for the seat of the organization will facilitate our decision-making process.

We believe that the verification system being designed for the CTBT should be universal in its application, non-discriminatory and should guarantee equal access to all States. We believe that important progress has been made during this session to clarify the relative advantages and disadvantages of various options and we hope an even clearer picture will emerge after the expert work scheduled to be held in the inter-sessional period is completed. We are glad to see that work is also beginning on developing the functions and role of the International Data Centre. In our view, the International Data Centre working as an integral part of the Technical Secretariat should have the capacity to receive, assess and analyse data from the International Monitoring System. It is vital that based on this assessment the judgement in any case of non-compliance should be the responsibility of the organization.

I would like to specifically address now the question of on-site inspections as a part of the verification regime as an issue of critical importance to us. My delegation is of the view that on-site inspections should be carried out only in rare circumstances and in the least intrusive and cost-effective manner possible. We believe that the design of the OSI regime should be geared to prevent its possible abuse while at the same time

(Ms. Ghose, India)

realistically retaining its effectiveness. Accordingly, we believe that the on-site inspection request should be based on IMS data. Full opportunity should be provided to the State party to be inspected to assist in clarifying the situation through a mandatory consultation and clarification procedure. The Executive Council should thoroughly examine the request and take a decision by a three-fourths majority of its members on whether or not an OSI is warranted. A managed access regime should operate during the on-site inspection to maintain a balance between the rights and the obligations of the State party being inspected. Such an approach will deter frivolous or abusive requests and would add to the credibility of the treaty.

At this time when we are so intensively engaged in negotiations on the CTBT, nuclear tests are still being conducted by some nuclear-weapons States. In this context, may I now read out to the CD a statement delivered in New Delhi on 15 September 1995 by the official spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs?

> "We are dismayed by the recent nuclear tests carried out by some nuclear-weapons States. That these steps are being taken by States which are parties to the NPT, soon after its indefinite extension, highlights the inherent defects of the Treaty. These developments represent a serious setback to the ongoing negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) and undermine its successful conclusion.
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> "India has taken a consistent and principled position on nuclear disarmament. This is why, from 1954, when Prime Minister Nehru called for a ban on nuclear-weapon tests, we have urged that a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) must be adopted. We view the CTBT as an important step towards nuclear disarmament. India is actively participating in the negotiations at Geneva which should not be impeded by continued tests by nuclear-weapon States. We hope that all countries will negotiate in good faith for a universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and effective CTBT and, meanwhile, refrain from actions contrary to its objectives."

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of India for her statement and the very kind words she addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Ambassador Skogmo.

Mr. SKOGMO (Norway): Mr. President, allow me to join others in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I should like to express our full appreciation of all your efforts in guiding the work of the Conference. I also assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation. I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome the newly arrived Ambassadors of Brazil, Canada, France, Hungary, India, Ireland and South Africa.

The negotiations on the completion of a CTBT has been the most important task for the CD this session. The work on this issue has progressed, if not rapidly. We are encouraged by the progress made in this third part of the 1995 session, in particular on scope, funding and the International Monitoring System (IMS). We welcome the commitments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States on a true zero-testing ban. We believe that it would be an

(Mr. Skogmo, Norway)

important contribution to the negotiations if all nuclear-weapons States could confirm identical views. There is reason for cautious optimism that with continued good will and hard work a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty can be concluded early next year and be ready for signature by the outset of the fifty-first United Nations General Assembly.

It has been a long-standing position of the Norwegian Government that continued or resumed nuclear testing by any country may complicate the negotiations on a CTBT, and furthermore not make universal ratification and implementation of, as well as adherence to, a CTBT easier. As was expressed in a joint statement by the Nordic Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 6 September, Norway strongly deplores the nuclear test carried out by France in French Polynesia. We are deeply disappointed at both the French and the Chinese nuclear tests in the light of the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapons States at the NPT Conference earlier this year to exercise the utmost restraint as regards future nuclear testing. These tests represent a setback for international non-proliferation efforts and may constitute a risk to human health and the environment in the areas affected. Norway therefore again urges the Chinese and French authorities to abandon current testing programmes and refrain from any further nuclear testing.

Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for your sincere efforts to achieve progress on the long overdue issue of expansion aimed at fulfilling the clear mandate given to the CD by the United Nations General Assembly last year. There is now an urgent need for expanding CD membership. The Presidential draft decision before us negotiated by you, Mr. President, represents a step in the right direction. It is not a sufficient step since countries on the list under the formula contained in the decision will still not be able to take part fully as equal partners in negotiations that are important also to their national interests. We would therefore express our strong hope that the members of the CD will make the proposed review of the final decision to include the 23 countries on the O'Sullivan list as full members at the earliest possible date and in good faith, and that the proposed review will not be a mechanism for further postponement. Norway is also of the opinion that an expansion of the CD by 23 countries on the list should not exclude further the admission of other countries willing to undertake the obligations of CD membership. Once again, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your efforts on this issue which have finally produced a positive development on an issue which is important to a lot of countries. We hope that the members of the CD will support your draft decision.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Norway for his statement and the very kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, Ambassador Dembinski, who will be introducing the addendum to the Committee's report. This addendum contains the results of the work carried out in the Committee over the two weeks following the adoption of its report.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland): Last week when I introduced the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban to the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1346), I noted that the Committee had continued its work since the adoption of the report in the Committee. I also mentioned that there would therefore be an addendum which would reflect the changes to the report. I am pleased to introduce here the addendum, CD/1346/Add.1, which was just adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Tuesday, 19 September. Delegations have, therefore, been able to work on the treaty text until the end of the session.

Upon adoption of this addendum in the plenary, the secretariat will incorporate the changes contained therein into the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. The secretariat will also re-number the paragraphs and update the list of documents. Thus delegates will have one coherent rolling text to work on when the Ad Hoc Committee resumes its meetings.

I would like to remind delegations that important expert work on the International Monitoring System will take place from 4 to 15 December and all delegations who are able to send experts are encouraged to do so. The experts are invited to convene in room V at 10 a.m. on Monday, 4 December, and a more detailed timetable will be available then.

Regarding the Ad Hoc Committee work during the inter-sessional period 8 to 19 January 1996 under my chairmanship, the secretariat will distribute in due time a tentative timetable of meetings. I wish to note at this point that there will be an open-ended Bureau meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Monday morning, 8 January, at 9.30 a.m., followed by a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee at 10 a.m. I look forward to seeing you then.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Dembinski for introducing the addendum to his Committee's report to the Conference. I intend to put this addendum before the Conference for adoption at our plenary meeting tomorrow, Friday, 22 September. I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Goonetilleke.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): I have several statements to make this morning, firstly as the representative of Sri Lanka and secondly as the Coordinator of the Group of 21. First of all, permit me to make a statement on the recent nuclear-weapon test explosions.

Sri Lanka notes with deep concern the two nuclear-weapon test explosions carried out on 17 August and 5 September by two nuclear-weapon States. The sentiments expressed, both individually and collectively, by the international community following the recent tests reflect the strong opposition to such tests, for they vitiate the current favourable international political and security climate.

Sri Lanka believes that such tests are neither desirable nor do they help enhance the confidence indispensable to the ongoing CTBT negotiations which are in their final stage.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

In this context, Sri Lanka wishes to remind the nuclear-weapon States of their undertaking given at the Fifth NPT Review and Extension Conference, inter alia, to exercise "utmost restraint" in nuclear-weapons testing.

Sri Lanka would, therefore, urge them to refrain from any action that could adversely affect the conditions conducive to the expeditious conclusion of the CTBT negotiations.

Mr. President, my delegation wishes to request you to release this statement as an official document of the CD and distribute it accordingly. May I now proceed to deliver the general statement of my delegation.

Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. The CD stands to gain from your reassuring pragmatism and personal charm, which you have so effectively brought into disposing of the Conference's unfinished business, as its 1995 session draws to a close. I wish you well in your relentless efforts and extend to you my delegation's full support and active cooperation for the success of your laudable endeavours. Allow me also to express the deep gratitude of my delegation to your distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Yumjav of Mongolia, Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico and Ambassador Kurokochi of Japan, who did their utmost for the success of the CD during their respective tenures of office.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome those who joined the Conference recently: Ambassador Arundhati Ghose of India, Ambassador Péter Náray of Hungary, Ambassador Jöelle Bourgois of France and Ambassador Mark Moher of Canada. Their predecessors had made substantial contributions to the work of the CD. I am confident that the newly joined Ambassadors, too, would do their utmost for the success of the work of this Conference. May I request the delegation of France to convey our best wishes to Ambassador Gérard Errera, who has departed our company after many years of distinguished service to the Conference, to assume higher responsibilities?

We are gathered here for our one but final plenary meeting of the 1995 session of the CD. This is a good occasion for us to take stock of our performance and to review our progress during the year. Such an exercise would no doubt enable us to prepare the final accounts of our work and arrive at its balance sheet. Such an endeavour should reflect our successes and failings, and our strengths and weaknesses. It is in this spirit that my delegation wishes to approach the 1996 session of the Conference. By drawing lessons from our shortcomings and failings we may succeed in agreeing upon a work programme for 1996, which will hopefully be more productive than the current session.

Looking back at the progress we have made on the draft CTBT, none of us would dare say that we whittled away the resources and time allocated to the Conference this year. On the other hand, we all share the view that much more could have been done, if we were able to decide on the programme of work at the beginning of the 1995 session of the CD and conducted our work according to that programme. That was regrettably not possible. However, it will not be a productive exercise to examine who should be blamed for that lapse. In retrospect, we, the members of the CD, are equally responsible for not

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

recognizing the realities and making demands that were clearly difficult to achieve from the perspective of existing political considerations. In view of this situation, which was clearly unproductive, my delegation fully supports the endeavours of the President of the CD to address the issue before the present session comes to an end. If we succeed, we would be able to reach an understanding perhaps now, on the agenda and organization of work for 1996. By doing so, we could avoid the pitfalls of 1995 next year and help the Conference to discuss substance rather than having another year-long debate on what to discuss. While we are engaged in this exercise, we should be conscious of the time available to us next year, and the quantum that has to be realistically apportioned for concluding CTBT negotiations during 1996. Having reached such an understanding, we can take a decision on what other work we can undertaken in 1996.

Whilst granting that our failures are many, it stands to reason to claim that our Conference has single-mindedly forged ahead in its quest for a CTBT. None of us here, I am confident, would gainsay this claim. This has, however, cast on us an added responsibility to finalize the draft CTBT treaty during the first half of 1996. My delegation will extend its wholehearted support towards realizing this goal by that target date. With a view to achieving this objective, my delegation desires an early resolution of the question of the future CTBT's scope, its verification regime and its monitoring process which are fundamental to the conclusion of the draft treaty. With regard to the scope of the treaty, my delegation deeply appreciates the significant contribution of the Australian delegation contained in document CD/NTB/WP.222 of 9 March 1995. Sri Lanka is pleased to join the convergence of views on the Australian proposal. In this connection, we are heartened by the lead taken by the United States followed by France and the United Kingdom. Sri Lanka always believed that in the environment envisaged under a CTBT there could be no room for peaceful nuclear explosions, however small the yield of such explosions. Time has come for us to agree on a total ban on all nuclear explosions. We would, therefore, urge the remaining nuclear-weapon States and other members of the Conference to support the Australian formula.

Sri Lanka has already made a statement of its position on the subject of recent nuclear-weapon testing and therefore does not propose to dwell on it at this stage. My delegation expresses its solidarity with those members of the international community who have expressed their deep concern on the recent nuclear-weapon testings, especially at a juncture when a multilateral treaty seeking to impose a total ban on testing is currently under way and well within its grasp. At the same time, we applaud those nuclear-weapons States who, notwithstanding the recent tests carried out by two nuclear-weapon States steadfastly observe moratoria in nuclear-weapon testing.

One of the important issues that has to be resolved by the Conference immediately is the question of expansion of its membership. Mindful of the call made by the forty-ninth General Assembly in its resolution 49/77 B, my delegation lauds your relentless efforts at finding a solution to this vexed problem and wishes you good luck in your endeavours.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

To begin with, we have to be alive to the fact that many members of the United Nations have been knocking on the portals of this Conference since 1979 with the intention of gaining entry to it and contributing their share to the work we are engaged in here. These countries, 35 in all, have been waiting patiently for many years expecting us to reach a decision. We simply cannot delay a decision on this matter any further. Simple logic demands that the CD should permit all those who have shown an interest in serving the body to do so. However, we have to be mindful of the unique role of the Conference. It is not a deliberative body as is the case of the UNDC. The CD is a negotiating forum. When the CD was established, its composition was deliberately kept at a limited number and that was done with the purpose of maintaining a delicate strategic and geographical balance. With the dramatic changes that have taken place in the international arena, the status quo has changed. We, therefore, along with the overwhelming majority of the membership of the Conference, supported the O'Sullivan package contained in document CD/1214 and presented in August 1993 which intended to seat 23 new members at the start of the 1994 session. Unfortunately, the package did not see the light of day and two years later, Mr. President, you are making a bold attempt to unwrap the package once again.

My delegation is not confident that the formula presented by you would entirely satisfy those who were waiting in the wings for so many years. In reality, it is a step backward from where we stood in August 1993. The question that comes to my mind is: What would happen if the same force that prevented the O'Sullivan package from being implemented thus far blocks assumption of membership of the Conference by these 23 countries for several more years? Would it not adversely affect the interests of those who are being admitted under the proposed package from effectively functioning as members of the Conference for an undetermined period? Yet, if this is all we can achieve, my delegation is willing to join the consensus on the understanding that they be permitted to assume membership if not immediately, within months, preferably at the beginning of the 1996 session of the Conference. If they are prevented from assuming membership for an indefinite period, the present package will be no more than a red herring.

Finally, I wish to add a few words on another important subject which we have ignored so far wishing that the problem would go away. This year's session saw many delegations taking the floor and urging in the strongest fashion that the CD should treat the subject of "nuclear disarmament" with the high priority that it deserves. There is a school of thinking that "nuclear disarmament" should be on the agenda of the 1996 session of the Conference. Sri Lanka belongs to that group. There is another group which has expressed the view that time is not ripe for taking up that subject in this negotiating forum. With these seemingly intractable points of view, some of us wish to introduce a "linkage" and others vehemently oppose it. If we continue to proceed on these lines, we are bound to face a "gridlock" in 1996 which certainly does not augur well for the work of the CD in a narrow sense, and our efforts in the field of disarmament in a broad sense. Meanwhile, you have urged the members of the Conference in your consultations not to attempt to take too many steps at the same time fearing that such ambitious ventures may not be productive in the end. What we have to do in the coming weeks is to be realistic and respect each other's points of view and be accommodative, to the

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

extent possible. After all, what we "give" or "take" are not losses or gains, but sensible contributions we thoughtfully make with a view to discharging our responsibilities, and thereby make this world a safer place for us and our children. In the circumstances, the request of my delegation is that the President of the Conference should, during the inter-sessional period, make sincere efforts to continue consultations with a view to resolving the issue before the commencement of the 1996 session. If we are able to resolve this matter, it will certainly help the Conference to begin its work in 1996 smoothly.

Finally, Mr. President, please permit me to make two statements, one on the agenda and organization of work for the 1995 session of the Conference on Disarmament and the other on nuclear-weapon test explosions in my capacity as the Coordinator of the Group of 21. The first statement is on the agenda and organization of work for the 1995 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Group of 21 recalls that at the outset of the 1995 session, the Conference on Disarmament had provisionally adopted its 1994 agenda for 1995, pending agreement on the review of the agenda. The Conference had also agreed, without prejudice to any future decisions on the organizational framework of the other items, to begin its work immediately on a "nuclear test ban".

During 1995, considerable and encouraging progress has been made in the negotiations relating to the CTBT. These negotiations must be concluded as soon as possible in 1996.

Unfortunately, the CD was unable to establish other ad hoc committees, as well as appoint special coordinators on the review of the agenda, expansion of CD's membership and CD's improved and effective functioning, in spite of extensive efforts made by the G-21.

The Group of 21 recalls that in the discussions within the CD it has consistently pressed for the inclusion of an independent item on the CD agenda and commencement of negotiations on the item on nuclear disarmament which has been accorded the highest priority by the international community.

The Group of 21 requests that at the outset of the CD's 1996 session, the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban be re-established in order to conclude CTBT negotiations by the middle of the session. The Group also urges the establishment, on a priority basis, of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the beginning of 1996, and a balanced consideration of all other outstanding issues on the CD's agenda.

My final statement is on the nuclear-weapon test explosions again in my capacity as the Coordinator of the Group of 21.

The Group of 21 recalls its previous statement contained in document CD/1329 (CD/NTB/WP.248) of 30 June 1995, wherein the Group had clarified its principled position on nuclear-weapon tests.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

Consistent with its principled position as clearly stated in the aforementioned document, the Group of 21 reiterates its concern on the two nuclear-weapon test explosions recently conducted by two nuclear-weapon States. Such tests could undermine the multilateral negotiations currently in progress at the Conference on Disarmament for the successful conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The States parties to the NPT of the Group of 21 are of the view that such nuclear testing runs counter to the decisions adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The Group of 21 reiterates its earlier calls and those of the international community upon the nuclear-weapon States to eschew nuclear testing in the interest of the CD's ongoing multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a universal, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty no later than the fall of 1996.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Ambassador Selebi.

Mr. SELEBI (South Africa): Mr. President, allow me to commend you on the dedicated way in which you have approached your responsibilities since assuming the office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. Your untiring efforts in achieving a successful conclusion of the 1995 session of the Conference is an example to us all. Please rest assured of the full cooperation and support of my delegation.

I have asked to address the Conference today to inform the participants of South Africa's ratification of the chemical weapons Convention, and of our accession to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its protocols. Both of these instruments were deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 13 September 1995.

South Africa's ratification of the CWC underlines my Government's strong commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and that they should receive equal emphasis and attention. The CWC which was negotiated by this body is an example of such an approach where States have undertaken to ban these weapons, to destroy existing stockpiles and to prevent their continued proliferation. The treaty also provides the basis for the international exchange of technology, equipment and material for peaceful purposes.

Our accession to the inhumane weapons Convention emphasizes my Government's commitment to promote international peace and security, to limit and alleviate the suffering caused by war and armed conflict, and its own responsibility to implement arms control policies to this end.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and for the very kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia, Ambassador Krasnohorská.

Mrs. KRASNOHORSKA (Slovakia) (translated from French): I have the honour and pleasure of taking the floor today in order to tell you very briefly that on 8 September 1995, the Parliament of the Slovak Republic approved the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. While expressing the hope that the Convention will enter into force as rapidly as possible, I would at the same time like to appeal to all signatories of the Convention to complete their ratification procedure as promptly as possible.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): I think it is useful to respond to some of the comments which have been made this morning about the continuation of nuclear testing, one of which felt it necessary to refer to France's resumption of a final series of tests. Last week I had an opportunity to explain the context in which the French decision was taken. Today I would simply like to note and regret the fact that, despite our efforts as regards transparency, certain people are continuing to make certain statements which we are not alone in considering to be contrary to the facts. In the first place I am thinking of the accusations relating to the supposed effects of our testing on the environment. These accusations are not supported by any serious evidence whatsoever. We, for our part, prefer to rely on analyses by scientific experts. These are clear, even though some people choose to ignore them. As you are all aware, we have invited scientists to come and confirm on the spot, on the completion of this final campaign, that our tests inflict no harm on the environment. This clearly shows the confidence we place in the guarantees which have been offered in this regard. How could it be otherwise when these tests are being conducted on our own national territory? We hope at the end of this session, which as several speakers have noted has been a very productive session, that next year the Conference will continue its efforts with renewed energy and will avoid pointless argument, so that, in keeping with our firm resolve, we are in a position to conclude the nuclear-test-ban treaty in good time to enable us to sign it in the autumn of 1996.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We have come to the end of the list of speakers. Do any other delegations wish to take the floor at this moment? None do.

As I announced at the start of this plenary meeting, I would now like to submit to you for approval the Presidential draft decision on the expansion of the membership of the Conference, as contained in document CD/WP.467/Rev.1. I do not think it is necessary to linger over introducing this draft decision which is before you. The draft I am submitting to you is the result of the intense efforts I have made since taking up the Chair. It is a compromise text that takes due account of the recommendations made to the Conference by the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 49/77 B adopted by consensus. This text is a first step towards solving this issue, whose important and urgent nature is acknowledged by everyone. I hope therefore that it will meet with the assent of all delegations. May I take it that the Presidential draft decision on the expansion of the membership of the Conference is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The secretariat has drawn my attention to an error in the Spanish version of the document we have just adopted. It goes without saying that this error will be corrected in the final version that will be included in the Conference's annual report to the United Nations General Assembly.

Before giving the floor to those who have asked to speak, I would like to make a statement myself, if you will permit me.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all delegations for the flexibility and spirit of compromise they have displayed, which have enabled us to take a decisive step in solving this important question. The decision we have just taken is to the credit of all the members of the Conference, who have been able to rise to the expectations of the international community. As I said during my bilateral and informal consultations, I will not fail to continue to address this issue during the inter-sessional period, taking due account of paragraph 1 of the operative part of resolution 49/77 B of the United Nations General Assembly, which "recognizes the legitimate aspirations of the candidate countries to participate fully in the work of the Conference on Disarmament", as well as the need to safeguard the character of the Conference as a negotiating body. Of course, there is no reason for this first decision on the membership of the CD to prevent our Conference from considering other proposals which have been formally introduced or which may be submitted to the Conference in the future, concerning the subsequent stages outlined in this decision that we have just taken.

A number of delegations have asked to take the floor concerning the decision we have just adopted. I give the floor to the representative of the United States, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Mr. President, I am taking the floor for a variety of purposes. First, to congratulate you on the draft decision on which you have worked so hard to bring to consensus a task that you began even before your presidency started. I also fully acknowledge the special responsibility of my country in delaying the first small step that we achieved a few minutes ago. I think the CD also deserves credit for showing the wisdom of finally stripping the membership expansion question away from other problems that have plagued us during 1995. I know that the 23 countries that we have just referred to in your working paper 467 are, of course, anxious to expedite the second phase, or decision, that is being called for in this document. The United States believes that this second decision could be taken today, right now before lunch. I would like to recall that the United States has been saying since 1993 that all 23 countries on the O'Sullivan list could assume their seats in this body with but one qualification, and that would be that no member State, either a new member or an existing member, should have the right to deny consensus on any decision that would be adopted by the Conference on Disarmament if it should happen that such a member State is, at the time of the decision, the subject of comprehensive enforcement measures imposed under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. We believe that this is a logical connection since all members of this Conference, as well as all Members of the United Nations,

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

should respect the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council. I have, therefore, taken the liberty of circulating a proposal this morning to members and observers, which I hope is now before you, that would enable us to take immediately the second decision called for in this morning's first decision. You will see that it is a two-part decision and is quite straightforward. I can understand that if you are inclined, Mr. President, to give this the consideration I think it deserves and which I think the 23 members of the Conference on Disarmament would like to have it given, you may wish to pause this plenary for a few minutes so that delegates can read, digest and consult upon this initiative.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States for his statement and for his proposal, to which I am not going to respond now. We have spoken at length on this issue both bilaterally and informally. I will revert to this when those who have asked to speak have made their statements. I give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Ambassador Selebi.

Mr. SELEBI (South Africa): Mr. President, thank you for giving me the floor once again. At the outset, I would like to share the appreciation of my delegation for the work that you personally have put in in attempting to resolve the issue of expansion of the CD. We take much pleasure and want to pay our respects to your efforts for what you have done. Briefly, we would certainly like to thank the members of the Conference on Disarmament for the decision that they have just taken; it is a decision, although not really satisfactory for those of us who have been outside, but it is a giant step towards finding a solution to the problem. Added to that decision, we think that the proposal that has been made by the representative of the United States, in effect attempts to put into effect the decision that has been taken. We, as South Africans, strongly believe we have a role to play, we think it is important for us to become part and parcel of the CD and we support the American proposal because it seeks to put into effect all that we have been talking about on the expansion of the CD. With these few comments, I would like to urge the members of the CD to give careful consideration to the proposal that has been made by the United States.

Mr. HOFFMANN (Germany): Mr. President, first of all, let me also express the gratitude of my delegation for all the efforts you are putting into making our work float, and this is one part of it. My delegation, of course, accepts the draft decision as it stands, but I would like to make two short comments.

One is that we really regret that it was not possible to give Slovakia the seat in the CD that is due to Slovakia; this is a point where my delegation is really disappointed that we were not able to solve this problem and now it is part of this package.

The second remark I want to make is that, of course, Germany is, with all the other members of the European Union, of the opinion that all members of the European Union who wish to participate in the work of the CD as full members (and this, in fact, is all of them), should be admitted to the CD. We have said so on many occasions and I repeat it here. I accept that not all of them can enter the CD at the same time, but it will be our endeavour to have

(Mr. Hoffmann, Germany)

every one of them come into this important work and in this context I can only repeat what I have already said many times before, that it is nice to have regional distribution but this is not a regional conference or a conference on regional subjects - it is a conference on global disarmament and everyone who has the interest, whatever corner of the world he comes from, should be admitted here to take part in our deliberations.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, I would like to begin by joining others in congratulating you on the decision which the Conference has just taken. That we have been able to take it is a real tribute to your determination, your patience and your diplomatic skill. That said, I must confess that my delegation went along with the decision to adopt Ambassador O'Sullivan's report with considerable reluctance, not because we do not wish to see the CD expanded - on the contrary, we continue to believe that all those who have applied to date should be admitted immediately and unconditionally. If you were to put this proposal to the Conference now, my delegation would certainly support it. Our reluctance is due to the fact that, quite frankly, we believe that the proposal which was before us and which we have adopted was not really a good one. It represented, at most, half a step forward for the 23 countries on Ambassador O'Sullivan's list. Our concern, and the reason why we suggested amendments to the draft text, was that it should not at the same time represent a step backwards for the other 12 candidate countries, including 4 of our European Union partners. With some difficulty, we were able to convince ourselves that the amended draft satisfied this requirement.

As I have just said, the United Kingdom's position is clear. We would like all 35 candidate countries admitted as soon as possible as full members with full rights. We do not believe that this would in any way alter the nature of the Conference or harm the Conference as a negotiating body. We certainly do not accept that the admission of 35 countries would affect the organization and efficiency of the Conference any more than the admission of 23. Clearly, both would require us to make some changes in our working methods, but after our experiences this year I am not sure that we feel that we necessarily have the most perfect working methods, so that might not be a bad thing. The main objection which has been raised to such a solution is balance, or rather, imbalance, but as Ambassador Berdennikov rightly pointed out in his plenary statement of 24 August, in a body where every member has the right of veto, the balance argument simply does not hold water. But if, despite that, people really want a truly balanced membership, I would still suggest that we have a simple solution before us. We could admit all 35 applicants and, if necessary, 3 or 4 other non-aligned countries to restore the existing balance, provided, of course, that volunteers among the non-aligned could be found. I hope that despite my pessimism today's decision will prove to be the key which unlocks the door to full membership, not only for the 23 but also for the other 12 candidate countries whose legitimate aspirations to join the CD I hope we all share. I am glad to hear you say, Mr. President, that you are continuing your efforts. I hope that at the end of the year you will at least be able to secure agreement on the appointment of a Special Coordinator to continue your work and to pursue a solution which will really be in the interests of the Conference and the international community as a whole.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement. I would simply venture to say that I am maybe a little more optimistic than he is. I am hoping that by the end of December I can have a positive report that there is consensus of some kind on this situation. But in any case, as I said before, I will do my best. This is the only thing we can pledge. I give the floor to the represent of China, Ambassador Sha.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to express its support for your decision on the expansion of the membership of the CD. However, at the same time, I would like in the name of an independent group of countries to make the following points on the expansion of the membership of the CD. It is the view of my delegation that the O'Sullivan list is the result of consultations over a long period of time among the CD members, and it had obtained almost universal support from the membership of the Conference.

It is the view of my delegation that the 23 countries on the O'Sullivan list should participate in the CD at the same time and with the same rights. We are of the view that they should have been admitted as full members of the CD long ago, but up to now they have only been able to wait in the wings. For that we express our regret. We hope that this issue can be settled at an early date as called for in the decision.

Secondly, it is the view of my delegation that the proper expansion of the membership of the CD is required by the situation and will contribute to the better representation and the effectiveness of the CD. The O'Sullivan list embodies the important principle of geographical and political balance. Certainly it is necessary to admit these countries as early as possible.

Thirdly, the reason for the delay in the admission of the 23 countries into the CD is known to all. We would like to express our appreciation to the President for his efforts in trying to settle the issue. The decision that has been adopted today is the result of tenacious efforts and serious and patient consultations. Although the result is disappointing, it reflects a positive step in the right direction. It is the hope of my delegation that such a step will not be used as a pretext for further delaying the settlement of the issue.

Fourthly, my delegation has also taken note that there are other countries which have applied for membership of the CD. And proceeding from the principle of political and geographical balance and in the interest of effective functioning of the CD, we should give positive and serious consideration to these applications.

Baron GUILLAUME (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, since this is the first time my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to say how much I have appreciated your diplomatic skills in the difficult post that you are now occupying. Not contenting yourself with chairing this assembly, you have made considerable efforts to preside over its destiny and to endeavour to make progress on matters which were

(Baron Guillaume, Belgium)

sometimes seriously deadlocked. The expansion of the very membership of this assembly is one of these issues which has been at a standstill for many years, and you made it a point of honour to try at least to make things move. I pay tribute to your courage and your resolve.

My delegation did not wish to hinder your efforts, and that is why I told you from the outset that should you arrive at a formula which secured consensus in this assembly, my country would not oppose it, and this is what has happened. However, I must say that I do not find this solution satisfactory, far from it, either for those who have been selected or for those left out in the cold, and that is something we regret very much. For those selected, the decision is purely symbolic, because it will have to be followed by a second decision before it has any effect whatsoever, and since any flexibility has already been ruled out regarding the choice of countries affected by this second decision, you have made the task all the more difficult for your successors. As for the countries whose names have not been put on the list today, it is wrong to say that their situation has not changed. You know that Belgium has always supported the idea of accepting all the countries that had submitted requests for membership to date, and we reject the arbitrary nature of the "O'Sullivan list". I understand the disappointment of those who today rightly consider that they have been excluded, without any guarantees for the future. For them I have a proposal to make to you, Sir, to ensure that arbitrary decisions are not worsened by injustice. In adopting this measure today, we have not only made a selection among a number of countries, but we have also adopted a procedure, whereby we will henceforth consider this list of countries as an indissociable group. In order that the CD should not be accused of applying double standards, depending on affinities or periods of time, just as we consider the 23 to be an indissociable group, we suggest that we should henceforth also consider the remaining 12 as an indissociable group, and, when the time comes, identical treatment should be applied to each of them, just as we have decided for each of the 23 selected today. I think that is the very least we can do for them, giving them an assurance that the procedure will not be changed when their turn comes.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and his suggestions. Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I would merely like to say that all these arguments that have been put forward to date by all delegations to explain their positions have been conveyed to me by all of you during the many bilateral and informal consultations, and that naturally, up to the present, if there had been consensus on any of these ideas, it would feature in the decision. I would just like to point out that all the proposals which have been made, from the first until now, are proposals which were not accepted by the members of the Conference, and that is why in fact the decision which we have adopted today is a first step, a modest step maybe, perhaps not satisfactory to any of us, but that is the very nature of a compromise, and fortunately or unfortunately this is perhaps the lowest common denominator, but it is the only common denominator. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile): I would like to state the following on behalf of Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Finland, Iraq, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

The urgent need to expand the membership of the Conference on Disarmament has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 49/77 B. We therefore welcome the Conference's decision today to adopt the report of Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan, Special Coordinator for expansion during the Conference's 1993 session, in which he recommended an expansion of the Conference's membership to include our countries. In doing so we wish to pay special tribute to you, Mr. President. Your skill and determination have brought about this result, and we are grateful to you for your efforts on our behalf.

We regret, nevertheless, that the Conference has been unable to reach a consensus which would result in the immediate acceptance of all our countries as full members, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/77 B. This must continue to be the Conference's urgent goal. We therefore call on the Conference to make every effort to ensure that our countries gain full membership at the earliest possible date, and in any case no later than 1996. Until that time, we look forward to the fullest possible cooperation with members on all questions with which the Conference is tasked.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and we reserve our right to address again the consequences of the decision adopted today in a more comprehensive manner, as well as the various remarks made by CD members on this occasion.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, first of all, let me join others in the congratulations which have been extended to you so profusely from all quarters regarding the persistent efforts which you made and the diplomatic skills which you employed in order to secure consensus on the issue of expansion of the Conference. The need for expansion in the membership of the CD has been indisputable in the face of a rapidly changing world. The membership of this Conference must reflect the new realities of the world. It must be made more representative so that there is wider participation in the important work of this Conference and greater persuasiveness in the decisions which we reach with regard to disarmament. The painstaking effort which was made by Ambassador O'Sullivan and which led to the formulation of the list of 23 countries left no doubt in anyone's mind that this represented the best chance for the first stage of the CD's expansion. Pakistan therefore supported that proposal. The unfortunate result of the 664th plenary meeting of the Conference, however, frustrated the legitimate aspirations of the 23 countries, most of which are friendly and even fraternal States. My delegation would like to extend our felicitations to these countries which have now been formally designated to become members of the Conference on Disarmament. The Pakistan delegation would have wished that the date for their admission would have been at the 664th meeting, or at least today, and not "at the earliest possible date to be decided by the Conference". This phrase in the decision needs to be clarified and it must be stated

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

emphatically to the world community that the membership of this Conference as a whole is in no way responsible for the further delay in accepting the 23 countries as full members of the CD.

The Conference on Disarmament will also have to give consideration to further expansion in the near future. We have 12 additional indications of interest in membership. My delegation is positively inclined towards this interest. Further expansion would, however, need to be carefully devised to take into account considerations such as the balance in the representation of regions and of strategic interests. Most of all, further expansion will need to be addressed in a manner which enhances the CD's role and effectiveness as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): Mr. President, I would like to join with other delegations in paying warm tribute to the commitment and dynamism you have brought to your presidency role.

In keeping with your own approach of tackling issues with honesty and transparency, I would propose to speak frankly and directly about the decision on expansion which has just now been adopted by the Conference.

Like a number of other delegations, we found ourselves in a dilemma in considering this draft. For many years we have wished to see an enlarged and more representative CD. We believe that, as long as it remains confined to its present limited membership, the Conference will not achieve its full potential. We are conscious of the serious dissatisfaction among the members themselves at the manner in which the CD functions at present. Few would feel that the Conference is adequately discharging the responsibilities entrusted to it by the international community. Of course enlargement of itself will not resolve all the problems which are paralysing important areas of the Conference's work. But an overhaul of the membership is an urgent and necessary part of a wider effort to give new impetus and direction to the work of the Conference.

We have listened to and sought to understand the concerns of those delegations who fear that enlargement might erode the character of the CD as a negotiating body. We remain convinced however that the enlargement will strengthen, not weaken, this body. It is the will of delegations which will determine the outcome of negotiations; their success will not be put at risk by the creation of a more broadly based Conference. Our position of principle therefore remains as it has always been - that membership of this Conference should be open to all United Nations Member States who wish to join.

We recognize, Mr. President, that the draft you presented today is a brave attempt to move matters forward. As regards the list of 23 countries, we know that many of them will make an extremely valuable contribution as full members of the Conference. We would not wish their prospects of assuming full membership of the Conference at the earliest possible date to be prejudiced in any way. However, I must clearly and unequivocally state our view that this text does not go far enough. What we have here is a palliative rather than

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

a cure: the underlying problem has not been satisfactorily addressed. Twenty-three applicants are to be admitted at an uncertain future date and the other 12 applicant countries are left without any clear sense of their situation.

Permit me to dwell for a moment on our national situation. I would remind delegates that Ireland submitted its application for membership of this Conference on 6 July 1982, 13 years ago. Our application was based on our long involvement in multilateral disarmament negotiations and a strong belief that our record provided a solid foundation for admission to the Conference. The lack of a concrete response to our application throughout the 1980s was perhaps understandable given the international political climate of those times. In common with many other countries we refrained from actively pressing our application in recognition of the delicate political situation in which the Conference found itself. Following the end of the cold war and the submission of further applications for membership, we judged it appropriate once again to press our case. We strongly believe that the changed political landscape should be reflected in an expansion of the Conference to enable it to deal effectively with its complex agenda.

Frankly, we found it incomprehensible that Ireland should have been omitted from the list appended to the report of the then Special Coordinator in August 1993. Because no criteria were presented, the basis on which the list was compiled remained - and remains - opaque. If weight was to be given to the chronology of applications or to the record of the applicant countries in the disarmament area, Ireland had every right to expect to be included in any such list. If the concern was for a proportionate strengthening of groups within the CD, a different selection would still have been possible. In short, we could find no basis in equity or logic for our omission from the list.

We are deeply disappointed that the decision now adopted - the first decision on CD expansion since 1978, the first since Ireland's application for membership, the first since the end of the cold war - does not deal in a clear and comprehensive way with all the applications for membership. Thirteen years after submitting our application, we believe ourselves entitled to a great deal more than this text offers.

Ireland will continue to press its membership application. We look forward to cooperating with the President of the Conference in the establishment of the progress reports which will be presented at the end of each session. We wish to state for the record that we interpret today's decision to mean that such reports will refer to all of the applications for membership and not only to the list of 23 countries mentioned in today's decision. And let me say, Mr. President, that I am particularly encouraged by the optimism you have expressed a few moments ago in response to the intervention made by Ambassador Weston of the United Kingdom.

In conclusion, I refer again to the dilemma I outlined at the outset. We strongly support the expansion of the Conference; we deeply appreciate your energy and integrity in seeking to achieve progress; we know that the Conference will be enriched by the membership of the 23 countries mentioned in

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

today's decision. But we do not conceal our strong sense of disappointment at the inadequacy of the present text. We profoundly hope that the Conference will return to this unfinished business in a more complete and more courageous way at the earliest possible time.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and the kind words addressed to me. I would like to tell Ambassador Anderson that, in conformity with my desire for transparency, and as I said privately and to all of you bilaterally and particularly when addressing the 12 candidates, I am committed to work during the inter-sessional period to ask the right questions and try to get responses that would allow me to come up with a good result that would command consensus. I shall present a report by next January so that the next President can work on it. But of course, as I said, the only thing that I am required to do is to do my best, and I will definitely do that.

I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, my delegation in turn wishes to thank you for the great energy and ceaseless efforts you have committed since taking up the Chair. You have just removed the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference from the deadlock in which it had been bogged down for the past two years. This in our view was an urgent and important matter. Therefore we are happy that thanks to your inventive diplomacy and your skill as a negotiator we have arrived at an initial result today. So we welcome the new members and hope that they will rapidly take their place in our work.

France considers this expansion of the membership of the Conference as a first phase. We have never concealed the fact that we would have preferred all 35 of the candidate countries to become members of the Conference; my colleague from India emphasized their legitimate aspirations at the beginning of this meeting. Therefore we think it important that the Conference should endeavour as a matter of priority to resolve the case of the 12 candidates that have not been included in today's list. Some of them, as you know, are our partners in the European Union, and we would like to see their contributions in the field of disarmament fully recognized and put to good use.

I would like to reiterate my gratitude to you and express the hope that the successful outcome of your initiative will be rapidly followed by a second phase that we so ardently desire.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I would like to thank the representative of France for her statement and to say that I was extremely touched by the words she addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Portugal, Ambassador Santa Clara.

Mr. SANTA CLARA (Portugal) (translated from French): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, allow me to express our satisfaction at seeing you at the head of this Conference. Knowing your determination and your patience, I am sure that you will be successful in this task. Portugal recognizes your efforts to bring about a solution to the problem of the expansion of the Conference that will respond to the concerns of the different countries in this field. The possible consensus was difficult to achieve. Therefore you will not be surprised to hear that some of us are not satisfied.

Portugal believes it was possible to envisage a formula that would welcome more broadly, as full-fledged members of this Conference, all the States which have applied to join. It seems clear to us that their participation as full members could not but contribute to enriching the work of this forum. We regret that the decision which has been approved today does not go far enough. We would like the door to remain wide open, so that the candidate States not mentioned in the decision can become members of the Conference in the near future. This matter cannot remain closed, and that is why I encourage you, Sir, as well as the entire Conference, to begin work immediately in order to prepare the ground for the admission of the other candidate countries as soon as possible. But I must confess that as of now I am encouraged by your determination and by what you have said to us today on this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Portugal for his statement and for his words of encouragement. I now call on the representative of Greece, Mr. Theodorou.

Mr. THEODOROU (Greece) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all many thanks for sparing no effort to try finally to devise a solution on a subject which has been dragging on for so long. Next, my sincere congratulations for the tenacity and perseverance which you have shown. Unfortunately, that was not enough for this Conference, which persists in a disquieting resistance to change.

The solution put before us was presented to us, more or less in the same words, two years ago. In the meantime the General Assembly has looked at it and adopted a resolution, the spirit of which does not seem to be shared by certain members of the Conference, even though they helped to have the resolution adopted. Worse still, some within the Conference even opposed any reference to the fact that the candidates have legitimate aspirations to membership.

When the proposed solution was first introduced, my delegation made a few comments. They were valid then, and they are just as valid today. I will mention just one: the way in which the Conference, with its present membership, works, produces the results which we are all witnesses to: all the items on the agenda are deadlocked, except - fortunately! - for one. Now if that is the effectiveness of the Conference, how would it be hindered by expansion, however extensive? The fact is that the Conference operates on the basis of consensus, and, whether we like it or not, consensus is in this particular case lacking. An expansion would not change very much.

(Mr. Theodorou, Greece)

As for the choice of numbers, they seem to be symbolic. Twenty-three in particular, the meaning escapes me, but not others, who are so keen on the figure that they refuse to depart from it. And yet, I would like to express my delegation's profound satisfaction and gratitude to the "Group of 23" and very specially to the Ambassador of Chile, Mr. Berguño, who last week took the various factors into consideration so well in his most eloquent statement.

I would have hoped that the Conference would draw to a greater extent on the principles of the United Nations, in particular that of the universal vocation which is its pivot. We have not yet reached that point in the Conference, which seems to be looking back towards a distant past which will never return.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Greece for his statement. I would quite simply like to tell him that in my view, having thoroughly considered the subject several times, things are a little more complicated than he suggested, and I would invite him to come to see the President to explain to him the problems as they stand in the Conference.

I now call upon the representative of Colombia, Mrs. Arias.

Mrs. ARIAS (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as we are participating in the deliberations of the Conference for the first time, I first of all wish to congratulate you on the outstanding work you have accomplished as President. Without any doubt you have made a major effort to achieve progress on matters of great significance to my delegation, such as the expansion of the membership of the Conference. I would also like to join those who have extended a welcome to the new members of the Conference.

As a member of the "Group of 23", my delegation fully supports the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Chile on this subject. Colombia regrets that a year after the adoption of resolution 49/77 B in the General Assembly, the Conference has made so little progress as regards the expansion of its membership, and that the outcome of the effort you have made over the last month does not fully satisfy the legitimate aspirations of our delegations. My delegation is surprised at the contrast between the many statements we have heard from members of the CD in recent meetings of the Plenary in favour of the expansion of the Conference and the result contained in the decision being adopted today, which does not fulfil the mandate of the Assembly, clearly inviting the CD to increase its membership to at least 60 countries.

We recognize the effort you made to harmonize views, and we thank you. We also urge all the members of the Conference to take a decision as soon as possible concerning the realization of full membership for all the countries mentioned in the decision, without prejudice to efforts to continue reviewing periodically the admission of the other countries that have expressed an interest in joining. The membership of the Conference and its pace of work should reflect the new international realities. It must be open and transparent, like most United Nations bodies, and all its members must have the same rights and obligations.

Mr. VATTANI (Italy) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to add my voice to those of all my colleagues who have expressed their feelings of admiration for the action you have taken, the mastery you have shown in your negotiations, the inventive nature of the method you adopted in trying to find a solution to this fundamental issue of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We are most grateful to you. This is perhaps one of the major successes of this 1995 session, and you succeeded in achieving it.

I also think that we should all thank you for enabling us to have an in-depth discussion of this subject today. Each delegation of the member countries of the Conference, the countries that have become members of the Conference today, to whom I extend a welcome, but also the others, the representatives of the 12 which are still outside our Conference, have had an opportunity to express their views in a very frank way, and that is a very important result. Of course, I agree with what has been said by my partners in the European Union. I think that the ideas put forward by Ambassadors Weston, Guillaume and Hoffmann are important. It is very important to consider that, in the context of a forum such as ours, the veto allows everybody to feel reassured as regards the criterion of geographical representation, balance among the countries which are members of our club, and I think the idea put forward to take into account the candidatures which have been submitted to date could usefully be borne in mind in trying to bring about a final solution to the remaining problems concerning the 12 countries whose requests for participation in our forum have not yet been settled. I think that the Ambassador of Ireland employed very convincing reasoning. The particular case of a country which submitted its candidature back in 1982 is extremely convincing. The role played by Ireland in all disarmament issues is a fundamental one, and that can also be said for the 12 countries which have been left in limbo and for which we will have to find a solution. But of course, Mr President, you had to be practical, to find a common denominator, and you found it, and we are pleased that you did. You have assured us that you were going to continue - and you still have a few weeks - consideration of all the issues in the light of today's discussion, and we will be pleased if, before the end of your tenure at the head of the Conference, you can produce proposals that can give satisfaction to the countries which do not feel reassured today. We convey to you our wish that this will be possible and we hope that we will have some final indications before the beginning of the next session.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and for the encouraging and kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): First of all, I would like to welcome Ambassador Náray of Hungary and assured him of the Algerian delegation's full cooperation.

The CD has just adopted the decision contained in document CD/WP.467/Rev.1, concerning its expansion. My delegation fully subscribes to this decision and sincerely congratulates you, Sir, on the efforts you have

(Mr. Meghlaoui, Algeria)

devoted to making this possible. This decision constitutes a step forward, a major step towards solving a problem which has been before this Conference for some time now. Since the O'Sullivan report was published my country has lent full support to the entry into the CD of the 23 countries concerned. We did so because we think this Conference must be enlarged - it has become a necessity. This Conference negotiates international legal instruments of universal scope and we believe that the more countries are involved in the negotiations, the better the chances of making the agreements concluded universal. It is true that consensus will be harder to achieve, but once attained it will be all the more solid - I would venture to say all the more legitimate. Also underlying our position are the changes which have occurred in the international situation. They have often been referred to in this forum - we will not bring them up again. We believe that the desire of each member State of the international community to become a full member of the Conference on Disarmament is legitimate. Therefore I reiterate my delegation's support for the 23 countries on the O'Sullivan list and my delegation very much hopes that they will be able to sit in this forum as soon as the next session opens, as full members. So I repeat my congratulations to you and encourage you to continue your efforts, hoping that they will not be in vain.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and his very kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Starr.

Mr. STARR (Australia): I have listened with care and respect to the serious and important views that delegations have expressed. It is not, however, my purpose to contribute in this intervention to this debate. Rather, I asked for the floor for two purposes. The first was to join with other delegations in commending your ingenuity and your tenacity, Mr. President, and congratulating you on your achievement in this matter. Achievement, as we all know, is difficult and all too rare, and I encourage you to continue your efforts. My second purpose in asking for the floor was, if I may, to express appreciation on behalf of my predecessor, Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan, for this Conference's adoption of his report. I know he approached his task with a grave sense of responsibility. Like you, Mr. President, he achieved what he could - what progress he could - in this multilateral environment. I will be taking great pleasure in phoning him and telling him that his report of August 1993 has been accepted. Better late than never, I suppose.

While I have the floor I would like to say that my delegation recognizes the limited nature of what we have achieved, but welcomes this as at least a modest step towards ensuring the increasing relevance of the CD and its work. My delegation hopes that, as a Conference, we are able to move promptly to make fully effective the membership agreed today of those countries named in the decision. We need also to focus on the implications of implementing a dynamic process of CD expansion, both with regard to the real claims of other applicants and with regard to the need for this Conference to address effectively its negotiating mandate in a dynamic and changing world.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Starr, for your statement and for your kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): First of all, my delegation's welcome to Ambassador Péter Náray, Permanent Representative of Hungary. The delegation of Mexico congratulates you, Mr. President, for your praiseworthy efforts and your proven skill that have enabled us to reach a consensus on the expansion of the Conference. My delegation is also gratified at this partial solution, in two phases, the first outline of which was proposed by my predecessor on 25 January 1994, as the record shows, with the purpose, like that of the consensus achieved today, of breaking the deadlock which we had reached in 1993 and which had continued until now. Of course, my delegation is prepared to approve the immediate application of the decision to expand the membership of the Conference, so that the admitted States can assume on this date, all together and in full, their responsibilities as fully fledged members of the Conference on Disarmament, in keeping with the principle of the juridical equality of States.

It is true that, as has been said, the list of countries to be admitted was drawn up in accordance with criteria of which we are not aware, and we regret the absence of some countries which have applied to join the Conference, with which my country has cooperated closely on disarmament matters in other forums, and countries with which Mexico maintains fraternal and friendly relations. We note that this decision provides for the review of candidatures at regular intervals, and my delegation will continue to fight for a balanced and expanded membership that will enhance both the representativeness and the effectiveness of the Conference. Today's decision is certainly not perfect, but it was the only one capable of securing consensus, as is shown by the fact that we took two years of meetings to achieve it and we did so only thanks to your admirable tenacity. My delegation thanks you, Sir.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and his kind words, which I particularly appreciated. I now call on the representative of Cuba, Mrs. Fiffe Cabreja.

Mrs. FIFFE CABREJA (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, we are encouraged by the efforts that you have been making since the very start of your term in the search for appropriate solutions to the stumbling-blocks that have arisen as the work of the CD has unfolded. This calls for recognition of your tenacity and perseverance. Today we welcome the finding of a solution to the important and urgent aspect of the expansion of membership of the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, today's satisfaction cannot make us forget the frustrations of the past two years, when the possibility of expanding this forum seemed to become more and more remote. There was and is, as we all know, the O'Sullivan proposal, which enjoys almost universal acceptance and could have been accepted had it not been for conditions that were improper, unacceptable and non-negotiable for my delegation, that were to be met before a certain country could participate fully in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mrs. Fiffe Cabreja, Cuba)

The outcome that has been achieved today thanks to your laudable efforts does not fully correspond to the interests of all delegations. However, it has been adopted and my delegation has gone along with that consensus. So, after a long struggle, we have found a regular solution that could have been and could be better if today, right now, we accept the O'Sullivan list. The CD can and must be expanded. States have the right to submit their candidatures and to be considered. We all have agreed on this. Yet we believe that the number of countries to be admitted to this forum should be given careful consideration in any negotiations which we may carry out, so that account is taken of geographical balance and interests, and which may enable this Conference to continue to retain its character as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Cuba for her statement and her kind words. I now call on the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, allow me first of all to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Péter Náray, the Permanent Representative of Hungary. I would also like to extend to you my most sincere congratulations for the commendable efforts you have made and for your persevering diplomatic endeavours in the negotiations with the various groups and with the delegations concerned, which has enabled us today to adopt in the Conference on Disarmament the decision contained in document CD/WP.467/Rev.1. Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan submitted his report on the expansion of the membership of the Conference when he was President of the Conference on Disarmament in August 1993. Unfortunately, due to circumstances of which we are all aware we were not able in August 1993 to take any decision on the expansion of the membership of the Conference and, at that time, the Conference requested me to continue the endeavours so that a consensus on the subject could be reached.

The Egyptian delegation wishes to express its satisfaction at the ongoing endeavours in which many Presidents of the Conference have participated, including your predecessor, the Ambassador of Brazil, Ambassador Lampreia, who is currently the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil. We are gratified that, under your presidency, those endeavours finally bore fruit and enabled us to adopt that decision. In our view, however, that decision is deficient in so far as the delegation of Egypt had hoped that the 23 new members would be able to exercise their full membership rights with effect from the day on which we adopted that decision. Unfortunately, we were unable to adopt a full and integrated decision. Circumstances are not always conducive to the fulfilment of our aspirations. The decision states that a decision concerning the new members will be taken as soon as possible. We urge you to continue these endeavours so that we can take that decision as soon as possible.

With regard to the other countries which have applied for membership of the Conference, we would like to welcome them here and we hope that your endeavours will enable us to meet their legitimate aspiration to become members of the Conference on Disarmament and, consequently, to participate in the negotiations on various issues, particularly the comprehensive test ban and the question of nuclear disarmament, which has top priority. Before

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

re-examining the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference, we should reach agreement, as we did in the Group of 21, on the optimum number for membership of the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard the delegation of Egypt shares the view expressed today by Ambassador Ghose of India.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I wish to thank Ambassador Zahran of the Arab Republic of Egypt for his valuable statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria, Mr. Fasehun.

Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria): Mr. President, we have been on this important issue for quite a while. The CD does have its own tradition, but sometimes tradition can be constraining and we wish to congratulate you for overcoming this constraining tradition. In another sense, we have to congratulate ourselves for overcoming the almost seemingly impossible gridlock. For close to two years - and indeed over two years - this body was not able to decide to expand its membership despite the fact that the United Nations did increase in members and despite the urgings of many Member States who wished to gain admission into what is now a no longer exclusive club of 37 countries. Those countries which have been admitted are congratulated for their patience, for their understanding and for going along with what was an unnecessary gridlock. Whilst we congratulate ourselves and those who are coming to join us, we wish to also urge that these new member States be allowed to take their seats as early and as soon as possible so that there will not be another gridlock. Once again, Mr. President, I want to congratulate you. You have done a very good job, and I want to congratulate all of us around this table, and we do hope that by this time next year we will be moving to another room to accommodate the new members.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Ghose.

Ms. GHOSE (India): I will be very brief, since I have already spoken on the subject before, to address myself to the draft decision which is before us. I just wanted to make three short comments. We have already said that we are in favour of the 23, on whom we have already agreed, to join immediately. We would be very happy to see them as members of the CD as soon as possible. We also are aware of the very careful wording that has gone into this, and I would like, at this point, to express my delegation's appreciation, Mr. President, to your considerable efforts as negotiator and personal determination to try to move forward on a subject which has bedevilled us for so long. In this, we do have the understanding that all the 23 could perhaps join us now. If it were possible, we would be very happy to support them immediately (provided the secretariat can provide the chairs), but in principle we would be happy to have them immediately. As far as the remaining candidates are concerned, my country has extremely good relations with all of them. We would be happy to see them and we believe that countries which wish to join and participate in the deliberations and the negotiations in the CD should be facilitated. However, having said this, when at the review session which has been promised in the last paragraph we look at this overall issue -

(Ms. Ghose, India)

and I would like to reiterate this once again - on the issue of the optimum number of members that would enable the CD on the one hand to meet the aspirations of the candidate countries as well as maintain not a balance but the efficiency of this body as a negotiating forum, we have no fixed ideas on a number; we are quite happy to look at this, but I think, in all seriousness, we need to discuss this and we can do this simultaneously when we get your report at the time of the review. These were the points. I do feel that we would not want any country which wishes to be a member of the CD to feel that there are some of us who do not wish them to be members of the CD. We do wish them to join us in what we are trying to do together. As the Ambassador of Germany said, these are global issues we are discussing; this is the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament and we do want as many people as are interested to get onto this forum.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you, Ambassador Ghose, for your statement and clarifications. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Indonesia.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Mr. President, first of all, allow me at the outset to congratulate you for your tireless efforts, perseverance and for all the work you have carried out in order to achieve what we have now on the expansion issue. My delegation also believes that the decision we have taken now is really very significant and very important indeed. I would certainly like to congratulate those 23 States which have been agreed upon by the plenary today and trust they will assume their membership as soon as possible. I would also like to support the proposal that has been made by my distinguished colleague from India: if feasible, we agree as soon as possible, even today, on the adoption of membership based on Ambassador O'Sullivan's list and then my delegation would also like to look favourably into the additional list of 12 which has already been put in front of us as well. Every country which is interested and would really like to contribute to the work of our common cause in the CD certainly deserves our support. For that reason, my delegation once again would like to congratulate you on your tremendous efforts, on your work and would also like to congratulate the 23 additional members that we will be having very soon.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Tarmidzi, for your statement and for your kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. LAMAZIERE (Brazil): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor first of all to congratulate you on the adoption by the Conference on Disarmament of the decision on expansion of its membership and to welcome the members of the so-called Group of 23 in our midst. As stated by the Ambassador of Brazil at the last plenary meeting, Brazil has always been in favour of the adoption of the so-called O'Sullivan proposal, without prejudice to the consideration of other candidatures in the future. In the past, Ambassador Lampreia, now presently our Foreign Minister as was mentioned by Ambassador Zahran of Egypt, tried to put into effect the O'Sullivan list trying to bridge the positions of some members of the CD. Unhappily his efforts were not successful. My delegation thanks you for the tremendous efforts you have put into this achievement and expresses the wish to see the 23 countries included in that list as full members of the CD as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you for your statement and for your kind words. I do not see any other delegation who wishes to take the floor, so let me just go back to what I said when I started this discussion. For reasons of transparency, let me make two points.

The first is a procedural one: usually when a proposal is made from the floor we have to give a chance to each delegation to look at it and to consult their capitals, so it would not have been possible for me, in the manner that I was conducting this Conference from the time I took over, to be able to present it for consideration today. Happily, we have another meeting tomorrow and of course we could in any case take up tomorrow the proposal made by the United States. But, having said that, there is another point of substance I must mention. My job is easy because since almost everybody has taken the floor on this issue you can see that there is no consensus on the proposal made by the United States delegation. I have heard many delegations say that they would be happy if we could admit the 23 as such today. I think this is the very reason why we had this long delay for two weeks about the word "together" in the text when we say "Accordingly ... will all assume together membership ...". I think this is something that I have to negotiate for quite a long time. Of course the Chair is neutral and reflects only whatever the Conference wants to do, and therefore I will simply say that if the members want to consult among themselves, then the Chair is open to any proposal that was made today - and many were made. If we can find consensus on that, I will definitely bring it to the floor tomorrow. But if there is no consensus, I will not bring it to the floor because there is a good tradition of bringing things that are ripe, not those that are controversial.

I also think that the debate that we had today, which was a very constructive one - and I would like to congratulate all of you on having presented your views in a very transparent manner about your positions - shows in fact that there are different views and that is why the Chair has undertaken the task of trying to study the situation and present a report by the end of the year on this question and on the other 12 candidates. Before presenting any report, however, I will consult all of you so that the report will reflect the positions of the membership of the CD on this very important issue of expansion. These are my comments and my summing up for today.

(continued in French)

Since we have come to the end of the agenda for this plenary meeting, I intend to adjourn the meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place tomorrow, Friday 22 September 1995, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.